

# What Every African-American Man Should Know About Heart Disease



*Michigan Department  
of Community Health*



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10,000 printed at 6.3 cents each with a total cost of \$630.

African-American men often don't like to talk about their health problems. They may not see a doctor until serious problems have developed. This makes prevention of illness and treatment difficult.

Understanding more about your body and how it works can help you develop a healthy lifestyle. This can prevent illness or disease. The major risky health behaviors are smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, lack of exercise, poor diet, unsafe sex and not wearing seatbelts in cars. These are things that can lead to illness, disability, and death.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for black men. It includes a variety of heart conditions that can lead to heart failure. The most common condition, coronary heart disease, causes more than 60 percent of all heart attacks. Some symptoms of heart disease are severe chest pain; pain that spreads to the arms, shoulders or neck; sweating; and difficulty breathing. Call your doctor or 911 immediately if you are having any of these symptoms.

## Risk Factors:

Major risk factors include high blood pressure, high fat diet, diabetes, smoking, little or no exercise, and drinking too much alcohol.

## What You Can Do:

You can develop a healthier lifestyle that includes:

- stopping smoking
- avoiding high fat diets
- exercising regularly
- cutting down on alcohol

These healthy choices can help prevent heart disease.

## You Can Make the Difference:

Staying informed about your health and avoiding risky health behaviors are vital in fighting the health problems black men face today. Develop a plan that works best for you.

